

LANDER UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY—2000

INTRODUCTION

Lander's procedures for assessment and planning are rooted in the University's mission and are broad based, with participation from all constituencies of the faculty and staff. Each unit establishes its assessment measures to evaluate the achievement of program goals that are consistent with institutional goals derived from the University's mission statement. Because the faculty and staff of the University are very unified in their dedication to its mission, they welcome the opportunities provided by the assessment program to improve services to the students and to the people of the region.

In 2000, components reported by Lander University are Majors or Concentrations and Academic Advising. Since the CHE is considering the creation of a uniform schedule for all institutions' reports of components other than Majors and Concentrations, the dates for future reports are uncertain. The University's schedule, pending statewide coordination, is as follows: General Education and Procedures for Student Development, which were last reported in 1998, are scheduled to be reported in 2001 and 2002 respectively; and Library Resources And Services, which was last reported in 1999, is scheduled to be reported in 2003.

MAJORS OR CONCENTRATIONS

The various academic units employ a broad array of assessment techniques in their program evaluation, each using multiple measures tailored for the specific qualities of the discipline. During academic year 1999-2000, majors in Business Administration, Nursing and Spanish reported assessment findings through the CHE Program Reviews, and Interim reports were submitted for Chemistry, Music, and Visual Arts. Because of the phasing in of the CHE's calendar for assessment reports based on the Program Review dates, the periods since these majors were last reported varies. Whereas the Business Administration program was previously reported in 1995, assessment of the Nursing, Chemistry, Music, and Visual Arts majors was reported in 1996. The Spanish major had only recently been implemented when it made its first assessment report in 1997. The chart below summarizes the assessment measures used by the majors under review.

	Business	Nursing	Spanish	Chemistry	Music	Visual Arts
Alumni Surveys	X	X	X	X	X	X
Exit interviews	X		X	X	X	
Student surveys	X	X			X	
Content area exams	X	X		X		
Employer Feedback	X	X				
Observation of clinical labs		X				
Portfolios			X			
Journal from experience abroad			X			
Performance in courses abroad			X			
Auditions					X	

Juried Exams					X	
Recitals and Concerts					X	
Fresh./Soph./Senior evaluations						X
Juried student exhibits						X
Individual Senior exhibits						X

Report of Assessment data from Program Reviews

Business Administration:

The School of Business Administration uses a broad range of assessment measures to monitor the success of its programs. Student and alumni satisfaction is monitored through surveys, exit interviews, and input from the Student Advisory Council. Employer satisfaction is evaluated through surveys, analysis of employment patterns, and input from the Business Advisory Council and the Health Care Management Advisory Council. Beginning with academic year 2000-2001, the content knowledge of graduating seniors will be evaluated through the Major Field Achievement Test in Business (MFTAB). While initial results of the achievement test will not be available until next year, the other assessment measures used by the School of Business Administration have produced positive results both in verifying the quality of the program and by suggesting ways of improving it.

Among the student/alumni surveys used is the AACSB/EBI Undergraduate Business Student Satisfaction Survey, which allows local results to be compared both with those of all participating institutions in the Carnegie classification and with those of six selected peer institutions. This survey, which was administered in 1998-99, uses a seven-point scale with seven indicating satisfaction far above expectation and the midpoint (four) indicating met expectations. The results showed student satisfaction at the University to be greater than that reported both for the peer group and for the Carnegie classification, with Lander students ranking their experiences above the average of all participating schools for every factor. The chart below compares satisfaction scores for key items on the survey:

	<u>Lander</u>	<u>Peers</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>
Faculty and Instruction for Required Courses	4.78	4.44	4.53
Training to improve presentation skills	6.16	5.38	5.42
Training to improve writing skills	5.69	5.03	5.25
Training to work effectively in teams	5.97	5.57	5.56
Training to improve computer skills	5.77	5.12	5.24
Breadth of the Curriculum	5.50	5.02	5.03
Amount and value of Student Teamwork	5.74	5.26	5.37
Size of Enrollments for Required Major Courses	6.21	5.60	5.77
Student Organizations and Co-curricular Activities	5.22	4.80	4.66
Extent and Quality of Skills Training	5.90	5.28	5.37
Advising and Course Availability	5.63	4.74	4.89
Facilities and Computing Resources	4.95	4.79	4.88
Overall Satisfaction with Program	5.13	4.83	4.90

In their surveys, Alumni too indicated a high level satisfaction with the education they received from the School of Business Administration at Lander University. Alumni and employers--both through surveys and through comments from the Business Advisory Council--have indicated that they share a positive attitude about the skills acquired by graduates and a general agreement that alumni exhibit professional

behavior, are able to work in teams, and demonstrate appropriate communication skills. Nevertheless, assessments of the program did suggest the opportunity for curriculum improvements. In response to assessment results, the School of Business Administration has

- changed the focus of MGMT 301 from "Management of Organizations" to "Organization Management and Behavior,"
- replaced MGMT 321, "Quantitative Methods," with updated BA 325 "Advanced Analytical Applications,"
- combined three Intermediate Accounting courses into two courses,
- changed the Health Care Management degree program into an emphasis under Business Administration,
- developed courses involving international business and working in teams, and
- modified courses to increased coverage of diversity, environmental issues, ethics, finance, and technology.

Nursing:

The School of Nursing maintains an extensive program evaluation process which in 1995 was recognized as an "Exemplary Program of Assessment" by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the South Carolina Higher Education Assessment Network (SCHEA). The program integrates a broad variety of assessment measures, including several content knowledge examinations culminating in the NCLEX-RN (the licensure exam for nursing), opinion surveys of students and alumni, and feedback from employers of program graduates through the School of Nursing Board of Advisors.

In October 1995, a NLN (National League for Nursing) site evaluation produced a recommendation that the nursing curriculum at Lander be significantly revised to reflect its organizing framework more consistently and both to identify clearly and to model professional nursing standards. Assessment data aided in the development of the resulting revised curriculum, which was implemented in academic year 1998-1999. Results of these program improvements will begin to be reflected in assessment results in the coming academic year when the new curriculum produces its first graduates.

Chief among the content area examinations used by the School of Nursing as a part of their program assessment is the NCLEX-RN. For the period being reported, NCLEX-RN passing rates and rankings among programs in South Carolina were as follows:

	Class of 1996	Class of 1997	Class of 1998	Class of 1999
Percent passing	96%	89%	77%	80%
Rank in SC	7 of 19	16 of 18	17 of 19	17 of 20

The 1998 results led the faculty to implement strategies to increase the success of future classes, including greater emphasis on hands on clinical experiences in all clinical courses, higher GPA standards for admission into the program, and stricter limitation on granting of petitions for variance from admission and progression standards.

NCLEX-RN program reports also provide data about student performance broken down by content area. In analyzing examination results, the School of Nursing focuses on test items reporting percentile rankings above 75 and below 26. Results during the past four years showed scattered high and low scores, but few outlying scores showed actual patterns of strength or weakness from year to year. Percentile rankings below 26 were concentrated in the class of 1998. It is expected that these scores will improve as the implementation of the new curriculum is completed.

Other assessment measures have led to specific program improvements. For example, student survey results indicating that nursing students were significantly less satisfied with computer services on

campus than the student body at large, the faculty examined the ways in which nursing students used computers and determined that much of the dissatisfaction resulted from lack of technical support when the School of Nursing implemented computer-based testing for its assessment examinations and NCLEX-RN simulations. In response to this concern, the faculty worked with technical services to ensure that, beginning in 1999, examinations were administered with full technical support under ideal testing conditions. Student survey results have also led School of Nursing faculty to address advising, leading to significant improvement in satisfaction scores after 1997.

Assessment data from alumni and employers has influenced changes in the curriculum. For example, the addition of a required nursing pharmacology class and the development of a clinical skills check list that students use across clinical courses in the nursing curriculum resulted in part from alumni survey data suggesting that the program should increase the emphasis in these areas. Assessment data gathered from both graduates and employing agencies have indicated that immediately following graduation, Lander BSN graduates usually assume entry level positions in hospital settings but soon move into multiple clinical roles in a wide variety of settings and that there is a trend toward community-based employment. In addition, the School of Nursing Board of Advisors has stressed the importance of preparing graduates for practice in community-based settings. Consequently, the faculty has expanded a three-hour public health nursing course from the prior curriculum into a six-hour, two-semester sequential course.

Spanish:

Because the Spanish major was implemented only in 1995 and has therefore had few graduates, the assessment program has only recently begun to produce significant results. The three assessment methods that have produced results to date--an exit interview in Spanish, a Portfolio, and a journal and other records of performance during study abroad--have been rated using a five point scale similar to the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) list of proficiency guidelines. The criteria address language behaviors, abilities in technological applications in the Spanish language and cultural skills. Each student is rated by two faculty members. Ratings of students who graduated prior to the program review are shown in the chart below.

Assessment Item	Student #								
	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	Avg
<i>Exit Interview</i>									
Accurate pronunciation and intonation in unprepared reading	4	4	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	5	5	3.8
Ability express self clearly in Spanish on a variety of topics	4	4	2	2	2.5	2.5	5	5	3.4
Oral proficiency evaluated by nationally recognized standards	4	4	2	2	2.5	2.5	5	5	3.4
<i>Portfolio</i>									
Written language skills acceptable to the educated reader	3.5	3.5	2	2	2	2	3.8	4	2.9
Proficiency in expressing opinions on a variety of topics	3	4	2	2	2	2.5	4	4.5	3
Appropriate use of technology	5	4	2.5	4	3	4	4.5	4	3.9
Integration of language, cultural, technological competencies	4	4	2	2.5	3	3	5	4	3.4
<i>Journal and Study Abroad</i>									
Cultural awareness/appreciation of cultural differences	4	4	2	2	3	4	5	5	3.6
Language awareness/improvement in written and oral skills	3.5	3.5	2	2	3	3	4	4	3.1
Course work and grades earned from granting institution	4	4	2	2	2.5	2.5	4	4	3.1
Average	3.9	3.9	2.1	2.3	2.7	3	4.5	4.5	3.4

These preliminary results suggest that the areas most needing improvement are "written language skills acceptable to the educated reader of Spanish" and "proficiency in expressing opinions on a variety of concrete and abstract topics." Consequently the faculty have begun to incorporate journal writing in

some beginning and intermediate courses, to increase the number of graded writing assignments in advanced literature and composition courses, and to require more specific writing about language and culture during the study abroad experience.

The alumni survey, which has not been administered because of the small number of graduates, will be implemented once there are sufficient graduates and once sufficient time has elapsed to make the results meaningful.

Interim Reports of Major Program Assessment

Chemistry:

The main assessment measures for the chemistry major at Lander University are the Senior Exit Interview and the Chemistry Entrance-Exit Exam. Because the exam was implemented as a pre-test / post-test value added assessment in academic year 1996-97, the graduating class of 2000 will be the first taking both exams. It is anticipated that there will be significant improvements in the exit exam scores as compared to the entrance exam scores. While the value-added data are not yet available, it is worth noting that, for the three years reported, the average scores on the 50 item content knowledge inventory have steadily increased from 17.7 in 1997 to 22.7 in 1998 to 25.2 in 1999.

The exit interview consists of fifteen standard questions rated on a four-point scale and four open-ended questions designed to elicit students' opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the program and their suggestions for improvement. In response to the standard questions, students have consistently shown a high degree of satisfaction with the program. Composite ratings from the twenty-six students interviewed between 1996 and 1999 were 3.5 or higher on a four-point scale, and only three items had composite ratings below 3. For all fifteen questions, the overall composite score was 3.3. The most positive ratings were given for items concerned with the competence, helpfulness, and enthusiasm of the faculty and the positive learning environment in the department. The least positive responses went to items dealing with availability of classes and with the quality of equipment.

Twenty-one of the twenty-six students used the opportunity provided by the open-ended questions to praise the competence and dedication of the faculty. Also repeatedly cited as strengths were the program's small class size, the strong preparation provided by rigorous course content, and the new science building, which was opened in 1997. In assessing the weaknesses of the program or making suggestions for improvement, students noted the need for better and more up-to-date laboratory and computer equipment. The students' remarks suggested that they felt that the chemistry program was eclipsed by the larger biology program, which also draws on the division's resources. Course availability problems, faculty turnover, and the need for more research opportunities were also mentioned by several students as areas for improvement. When asked to provide additional comments, fourteen of the students did so. Twelve of the fourteen were positive, with the most often repeated specific comment being the expression of confidence in the preparation for careers or further study offered by the program.

The size of the Chemistry program will make it difficult to address the course availability problem. Some elective courses will continue to be offered every other year. However, the problem has been exacerbated by the loss of a faculty line in biochemistry, which created a shortage of faculty and eliminated the biochemistry elective. The faculty will continue to seek permission to restore the biochemistry position. The chemistry program has been more successful in addressing the adequacy of equipment. During the period being reported, the discipline spent over \$175,000 on new equipment for the chemistry teaching and research laboratories, received \$40,000 from the Lander Foundation to repair and upgrade the NIVIR instrument, and acquired several new computers in the environmental science computer lab. Realizing that faculty turnover was influenced by low salaries that negatively affected the quality of new hires, the discipline has offered higher entry level salaries in the last two years and has attracted two new faculty who are progressing well toward tenure. Chemistry majors' need for more undergraduate research was considered in the design of the new building. Because faculty members in

the science building have their own laboratories, they are now able to provide students with research opportunities. In addition, the program collaborates with local industries to provide students with internship opportunities, which not only strengthen research skills but also improve the students' preparation for employment.

Music:

The music program, which achieved NASM accreditation in 1997, assesses its major using measures which fall into two groups: measures based in student performance and surveys of students and alumni. The performance measures include auditions for entry into the program, annual juried exams, auditions for the honors recital, and senior solo recitals. Results of the initial auditions led to redesign of information sent to prospective students. The new packets are designed to give clearer information about the nature and the expectations of the program as well as of the audition process. The impact of greater attention to the initial audition process can be seen in the exit recital; the senior recitals have been of increasingly high quality as more talented students have been recruited. The series of performance assessments allows the faculty to monitor students' progress as they move through the program. Faculty members have been pleased with the preparedness of the student performers and have made no program revisions in response to information from these assessments during the past four years. However, both in order to document student achievement and to allow students to learn from their peers, the department has established a library of video recordings of student solo recitals.

Of the eighteen music program graduates who responded to an alumni survey in 1999, ten were employed in music related jobs, and three of those who were not were involved in artistic or community service activities related to their major. Eight of the alumni were working toward or had completed their graduate degrees. Alumni had high praise for the program and its faculty, and several particularly pointed out the value of the broad liberal arts education provided in the BA program. Only eight of the alumni made substantive suggestions for improvement, five of which related to elements of the teacher education track controlled by the School of Education. Suggestions directly related to the music program were that the department (1) add a music therapy program and a graduate degree in music education, (2) establish a music library within the department, and (3) increase computer related instruction. The first of these suggestions was deemed to be unrealistic given the size of the program and institutional priorities. While a music library has not been established, the music holdings in Lander's Jackson Library have been improved, particularly through special attention to the building of the CD collection. The department has also sought funding for Midi Music Lab upgrades and has equipped one station in the Fine Arts Division Macintosh lab with a keyboard and with *Finale* software. Expertise in music technology, especially *Finale*, was one of the criteria in the position description for a new brass instructor hired for fall 2000.

Music faculty learned from senior interviews that students were interested in new course offerings and more frequent offerings of selected courses, assistance in preparation of résumés, and opportunities to interact with professional artists who perform on campus. Some of these concerns are difficult to address. Because of the size of the program and the heavy teaching loads of the faculty, the program is not able to add courses or offer them more frequently at present; and artists in concerts arranged by Greenwood-Lander Performing Arts are not required by their contracts to interact with students. However, when funding is available, the department will bring in guest artists sponsored by the music program who will work with students. In response to the students' concern about résumé preparation, the faculty have worked to communicate more clearly that this matter is addressed in Music 400, the capstone course.

Visual Arts:

Methods of assessments used by the Visual arts area of the Division of Fine Arts include year-end interviews of Freshmen and Sophomores, an exit interview with graduating seniors, an annual juried student exhibition, senior exhibitions, and an alumni survey. The freshman and sophomore interviews provide students an opportunity to express their concerns and allow the faculty to assess students' work habits, social skills, and artistic qualities as they move through the program. While the interviews have not

in recent years revealed pervasive problems that required program revisions, they have uncovered academic and financial or personal problems of individual students, which were addressed through advising and referral to other offices. The freshman and sophomore interviews are followed up by the senior interview and by student exhibitions, which track further development of artistic skills. The Visual Arts faculty have not found the senior exit interview, as presently administered, to be effective as a measure of the quality of the program as a whole; consequently, the department is exploring alternative approaches.

The performance assessments are the Annual Juried Student Exhibition and each student's Senior Exhibition. All majors are eligible to submit work for the juried exhibition. In order to make the event more useful as an assessment tool, a database was developed in 1999 to record characteristics of all entries. It is now possible to look at the exhibition in terms of media, numbers of students, class status, etc. This will strengthen the department's ability to use the exhibition as a part of its value-added assessment. Each student's senior exhibition is evaluated by each of the studio faculty and those evaluations are compiled. The most significant result of assessment of student performance through the series of exhibitions has been the recognition and agreement among the faculty that more attention should be given to students' drawing skills. In response to this, a one-hour drawing course, Art 320, has been added. The course will be available to current students, but those entering under the 2000-01 catalog will be required to repeat the studio course three times for three credit hours. The class will be taught on a rotating basis by all studio faculty in order to offer students a range of approaches.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Assessment of academic advising at Lander University takes place in academic divisions and schools and through the Academic Advising Center. Students who have declared majors are advised in their academic units, whereas advising for those who have not—designated "general education majors"—is coordinated by the Academic Advising Center. In addition, students on probation are provided with supplementary advising through the Student Academic Success Program (SASP), administered by the Director of Instructional Services and the Coordinator of the Academic Advising Center. In 1996, SASP was designated by the CHE and the South Carolina Higher Education Assessment Network as having an exemplary program of assessment.

Assessment of Advising within Majors

Each division/school has a plan for assessment of the advising of its majors and for evaluation of advisors. While composite scores on the various questions within the surveys provide an indication of strengths, weaknesses and trends within the divisions and schools, the survey information is also used in evaluation of faculty for their annual performance reviews. Most academic units assess advising through questionnaires administered after each registration or pre-registration period, but one division--Mathematics and Computer Science--has elected instead to rely on the chair's evaluations of faculty for assessment of advising within the unit.

Since each academic unit has devised its own assessment instrument, surveys are quite different, some using a five-point likert scale, and others using a three- or four-point scale. Whatever method was used, the composite averages show a high degree of satisfaction for most divisions and schools. On the chart below, which reflects the period since these data were last reported, scales have been converted to uniformly show the highest number as most positive:

Composite Results of Assessment of Academic Advising	
Division/School	Composite Score
<i>Surveys with 3-point scale</i>	
Biological and Physical Science	2.82
Behavioral Science	2.66

<i>Surveys with 4-point scale</i>	
Humanities	4.00
History/Political Science	3.62
<i>Surveys with 5-point scale</i>	
Fine Arts	4.66
Nursing	4.62
Business	4.48

The Humanities Division administered its survey for the first time in 1999-2000, having previously included evaluation of advising as a part of its capstone courses in English and Spanish. All responses in the very small initial sample were strongly positive. Among the divisions that reported composite survey results when this area was last reported, four of the six units showed improvement ranging from .05 to .25 points over their already strong performance. For the remaining two units, comparison with the previous report is not meaningful. Both units--the Division of Behavioral Sciences and the Division of Biological and Physical Sciences--took very strong action to improve student participation in the survey, having noted at the time of the last report their disappointment with the rate of return. By changing their procedures, the Division of Biological and Physical Sciences achieved a 100% rate of return, and the Division of Behavioral Science saw similar dramatic improvement in participation. Both divisions showed excellent results; over a three-year period, 297 of 330 surveys rated advisors from the Division of Biological and Physical Sciences as "excellent," as did 307 of 447 in the division of Behavioral Sciences.

The greatest improvement in composite scores was shown by the School of Business (.25 point increase) and the School of Nursing (.2 point increase), with both having the strongest scores on three questions about advisors' knowledge of policies and procedures, general education requirements, and major requirements. In 2000, composite scores exceeded 4.5 on nine of ten questions for Business and on all questions for nursing, while no question had a composite score lower than 4 in any of the semesters reported from fall 1997 to spring 2000. The Division of Fine Arts, which also uses a 5-point scale, presented composite scores for the reporting period on individual questions ranging from 4.42 to 4.81. The only question with a score below 4.5 dealt with the advisor's assistance with non-academic matters. Items with the highest marks concerned communication skills and knowledge of the degree program.

Assessment of Academic Advising of General Education Students

The Academic Advising Center assesses advising through two student questionnaires. The "Academic Advising Center Evaluation" is designed to monitor students' reasons for visiting the center, to determine how well their needs are being met, and to provide them an opportunity to make suggestions and to identify areas of need. The return rate for the survey had been quite low, but for 1999-2000, changes in procedures for collecting data increased the rate to 23% (113 of 502). In 1999-2000 seventy-five percent of the respondents indicated that their expectations in coming to the center had been met, seventy-nine percent noted feeling comfortable coming to the center and sixty-seven percent said that they would recommend the center to a friend.

Many of the comments and suggestions made by the respondents related to services already available from other offices on campus, such as peer tutoring, job fairs, and career counseling. This suggests that the main area needing improvement is communication about available services. Such communication has been affected by the fact that the Office of Instructional Services, which includes the Advising Center, has not been able to fill the position of the Administrative Assistant since September 1998. The unit will continue to seek restoration of that position. While career counseling is offered primarily by the Office of Career Services, the Advising Center had supplemented their services between 1995 and 1999 by providing students with Self-Directed Search (SDS) software, which allows them to explore career opportunities. That software has been unavailable since summer of 1999 because of the implementation of the Computer Science Tutoring Laboratory by the Office of Instructional Services. The SDS software will again be made available to students in fall 2000.

The other questionnaire, a fifteen-item "Advisor Perception Inventory," allows general education majors to rate their advisors on a four-point scale, with four being the most positive score, indicating strong agreement with the item. Surveys are distributed to students during pre-registration and are returned to the Advising Center. In 1999-2000 the return rate was twenty-one percent (113 of 511) up from twelve percent (78 of 633) in the last reported year, 1996-97. From 1997-1998 to 1999-2000, the composite average for the 15 questions was 3.52, demonstrating a high level of satisfaction with general education advising. Ratings for individual questions ranged from 3.15 to 3.81, with the highest ratings (those above 3.7) shown for the following questions:

My advisor has been actively helpful and has been genuinely concerned about my welfare (3.81)
 My advisor has been readily available for consultation during scheduled office hours (3.76)
 My advisor has been well prepared for our meetings and expects me to be prepared (3.75)
 I would recommend my advisor to incoming GEN ED students (3.74)

The lowest ratings (those below 3.3) were as follows:

I believe my advisor anticipates needs that I have (3.21)
 My advisor and I spend most of our time discussing academic problems (3.15)

Faculty who advise general education students are also asked to evaluate the program in a survey that requests written responses/suggestions. Because the number of general education advisors is small, this sort of survey was judged to be manageable as well as more productive than multiple choice rating surveys. During the period being reported, surveys were completed by thirteen advisors, ten of whom gave positive responses when asked to comment on the effectiveness of the program. Two of the remaining faculty were undecided. Earlier assessment results, which were reported in 1997, led to changes in the "Info Exchange" sessions that had been established to convey current information about advising issues to advisors of general education majors. Eight of the thirteen respondents to the faculty survey had attended those sessions, and all expressed satisfaction with them. The survey of general education advisors also included items designed to allow the Advising Center to monitor the methods being used in advising general education students and items soliciting suggestions and comments. Faculty had few suggestions, and comments were most often praise for the program and the Advising Center staff. The suggestions that were made tended to involve advisor/student contact. Advisors expressed a desire for more frequent opportunities to interact with advisees at times other than registration/preregistration periods; nevertheless, some felt that the existing opportunity--the requirement that ACAD 101 students interview their advisors--was not effective.

ACT Student Opinion Survey

In addition to evaluations administered by the Academic Advising Center to general education students, students from across the university rate their experience with advising through the annual ACT Student Opinion Survey, which is administered by the Office of the Dean of Students. This survey is particularly useful since it permits comparison with national data. For the three survey items related to advising, Lander's data have consistently compared favorably with national data for public institutions.

	Satisfaction with Availability of Academic Advisor		Satisfaction with Information Received from Academic Advisor		Overall Satisfaction with Academic Advising Services	
	Lander	National	Lander	National	Lander	National
Spring 1996	3.84	3.69	3.79	3.62	3.90	3.67
Spring 1997	3.86	3.69	3.82	3.63	3.96	3.67
Spring 1998	3.92	3.72	3.82	3.67	3.94	3.68
Spring 1999	4.06	3.72	3.94	3.68	4.05	3.74
Spring 2000	4.06	n/a	4.02	n/a	4.15	n/a

These data also show a trend of improvement in recent years, reflecting the impact of an increased emphasis on advising across the University. Annually the Dean of Students provides academic units with composite data from the ACT survey as well as data broken down by academic major and by ethnicity. Faculty are then able to compare the responses of their students with those of others in the institution as well as with those of students across the nation and to include these responses in their own assessment within their units.

The Student Academic Success Program

The Student Academic Success Program was developed in 1995 as an advising program to address the problem of student retention. The purpose of SASP is to help students on academic probation find and implement effective strategies for academic improvement. Students on academic probation are divided into several categories, which offer increasing contact with SASP personnel. Students with a 1.9 and above GPA are asked to work closely with their academic advisors, and they are allowed to attend study skills workshops. Students with a GPA of 1.5 - 1.899 have contracts that indicate to each student specific grades that must be achieved in order to get off probation and identify individualized requirements for workshops, coursework or tutoring. Students with a GPA of below 1.5 may, in addition to the requirements imposed on the previous group, be asked to enroll in College Seminar, a two-hour study skills course and are assigned faculty mentors in addition to their regular academic advisors. The mentors meet with the students on a regular basis and provide extra encouragement and motivation so that students feel that they have a network of support at Lander.

The ultimate measure of its success is an analysis of grade point averages at the beginning and end of the program. The GPA increases of participants are compared with those of students eligible for the program who chose not to participate. In academic year 1998-99, a larger percentage of eligible students chose to participate in fall semester than in spring. In fall semester 86% of the participants were freshmen and sophomores, increasing to 89% in spring. The chart below shows 1998-99 comparisons:

1998-99 SASP Results	Fall		Spring	
	Participants	Non-participants	Participants	Non-participants
Number of students	50	98	196	97
% with increased GPA	94%	70%	77%	66%
% remaining on probation	32%	43%	36%	41%
% suspended	10%	28%	30%	37%

Results for 1999-2000 were not completely tabulated at the time of this report; however, preliminary results show that GPAs of those participants who remained eligible to continue their studies at the end of the spring term had increased to a significantly greater degree than those of non-participants.

Status at end of Spring 2000	Average Change in GPA From Fall 1999 to Spring 2000	
	Participants	Non-participants
Off academic probation	.6206	.2830
Academic probation	.2963	.0619
Suspended	-.0746	-.1179

GPA data continue to attest to the success of SASP in promoting academic improvement.

Advising Module

In order to further improve advising at Lander, the University has recently obtained an advising module to be used with its new administrative software. The module will assist advisors and students in

monitoring progress through degree programs by identifying courses that meet program requirements and tracking progress toward completion of those requirements, thereby making the advising process more error-resistant. During summer 2000, the module is being set up with appropriate data. Advisors in the School of Business will be trained to use the module and will pilot the program in 2000-2001; subsequently, all Lander advisors will be trained to use the software.

Prepared by Susan Guinn

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